

Mandatory joint elections
(HB 1745, by Russell)

DIGEST:

The bill would have required two or more political subdivisions covering the same territory and holding elections on the same day to hold their elections jointly in the same county precinct polling places. A committee of the jurisdictions holding the election would determine allocation of election expenses, ballot format, and other questions. Cities and other political subdivisions would use county precincts and polling places in their elections, although a local government holding an election could determine that use of the county polling places was not feasible. Water conservation and reclamation districts composed of part of one or more counties would not be subject to the requirement of mandatory joint elections and use of county precinct polling place.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

The Governor agreed in principle with the idea of joint elections, but said HB 1745 is an unsatisfactory approach. The administrative requirements in the bill are unworkable, especially in large urban areas where there is considerable overlap of governmental units. Requiring use of the numerous county election precincts in elections held by other political subdivisions would create tremendous financial burdens.

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VIEW:

Rep. Russell said that the Governor was wrong. There would be few implementation problems using modern computer technology, especially since most local jurisdictions use county poll lists. In fact, Dallas County election officials estimated savings would be \$250,000 per year. It would be worth the possible extra cost in some areas to accommodate voters by reducing the confusing number and variety of polling places. Some local political interests might object to increasing voter participation and turnout, but that is a poor excuse for blocking the bill.

Rep. Russell has asked the House Elections Committee to study this issue during the interim.